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SONGS OF LOVE AND LIFE



LIEUT.-COL. DUDLEY SAMPSON

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SONGS OF LOVE AND LIFE

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SONGS OF LOVE AND LIFE

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL DUDLEY SAMPSON

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INTRODUCTION

LIEUT.-COLONEL DUDLEY SAMPSON was born in February 1841, and died in February 1917. His father, Colonel William Sampson, was a member of a family that has held estates in Nottinghamshire for seven centuries; on his mother's side he descended from the De Warennes of Sussex, and inherited a strain of Norman blood through his French grandmother, *née* De Garenciers. Dudley Sampson was educated at Sir Anthony Brown's school, and in France, and at the age of sixteen was gazetted to the 34th Regiment, and went out to India in August of the Mutiny year, 1857. He carried the regimental colours at Cawnpore, and was among the first to enter the captured city. He took part in the battle against the Gwalior contingent, where the odds were twenty to one against the British troops, and his regiment lost eleven officers. He was in the storming of Meeangunge and the relief of Lucknow. He was lent for special service with the 9th Bengal Lancers; then transferred to Hodson's Horse for the Bhutan Frontier Expedition. He remained in the latter regiment for the rest of his military career,—another twenty years,—taking part in the Black Mountain

campaign on the North-West Frontier in 1868, and in the Malta Expedition of 1878, after which he finally left the Service.

He was known throughout India not only as a brilliant soldier but as the finest gentleman rider of his day. In the season of 1869-70, with fifty-six mounts, he won forty-two races, and was only once unplaced. His light weight and delicate hands and, still more, his complete sympathy with his mount, made his horsemanship a fine art.

He was still young, only thirty-seven, when he left the Army, having seen twenty-one years' service, married, and settled down to country life in England. His wife, Katherine Mary, was the only child of Mr. William Dixon Jollands, of Buxshalls, in Sussex. Two sons were born to them; of whom the elder, Dudley, died, to the infinite grief of his parents, in 1899, while studying abroad for the Diplomatic Service. The younger son, Captain Noel Sampson, joined the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and has served throughout the present war, first with the cavalry, and later with the Royal Flying Corps.

Colonel Dudley Sampson's interests were many and varied. He became a J.P. and Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Sussex, and took an active share in all that made life a better thing for his neighbours of all classes. He was a keen politician of the Conservative school, and especially

threw his energies into Lord Roberts' crusade for National Service. Then, too, he was by nature and temperament an artist. His drawings were often exhibited; his music was a delight. He would write a play, and then act in it, or improvise a charming speech at the shortest notice. His poems reflect his varied career, his happy life at home with its deep affections, and the sorrow of his great loss. They express the artist's sense of beauty, and also his life-long quest for the eternal truths that underlie all outward forms of faith. In his perception of spiritual truth Colonel Dudley Sampson was in advance of his day. He held in faith what is now to many a clear vision of the coming age's new revelation, in whose light materialistic dogma and tradition disappear, and Life is seen as "Coeval with Eternity, part of the Very God."

The following songs have been set to music by Lady Arthur Hill : "The Good Old Cause," "Song of Love and Life" (Metzler) ; "Waning Year," "Two Thoughts" (Boosey) ; "Stand to Your Arms" and "The Eastern Hills" (Novello).

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SONGS OF LOVE AND LIFE

THE SONG OF LOVE AND LIFE

SONG of all songs! The song of love and life,
Prayer of all prayers, that love and life be given,
Hope of all hopes, that through this toil and strife
Their dual rays may light our path to Heav'n:
No more, no less, is perfect blessedness!

Oh, Love! Without thee what has life to give?
Life without Love—Ah! say what is thy gain?
To live and love, and so to love and live—
This is earth's cry, and this is Heaven's refrain:
No more, no less, is perfect blessedness!

TWO THOUGHTS

FAR down the vale of years—
The vale of smiles and tears—
There flies a loving thought
With sweetest memories fraught ;
And as it speeds along
The bygone hours among,
It heaves a gentle sigh,
Its fellow thought is nigh.

Once more they meet thro' the vanished days,
Through broken vistas and severed ways,
Down in the vale of words untold
The two are one, as in the days of old.

Through years of weary life,
Through years of toil and strife—
The two have parted been,
Unanswering and unseen ;
But now the pain is o'er,
For ever ever more
The *one* thought wends its flight
Into the perfect light.

HOMING

AH! come to me, dearest, my bosom is panting
To clasp thy dear form in a loving embrace,
For o'er the blue mountains the shadows are
slanting

And the gloaming of eventide darkens apace.
Where art thou? Where art thou? I long for
thy coming.

'Tis night and not sunset when thou art away!
Let me hear the dear footsteps that tell of thy
homing,
For only where thou art, to me is the day.

The darkness comes sweeping o'er hill-side and
heather,

The rose-light is dying away in the west;
'Tis time, O my love, we again were together,
'Tis time that these arms should enfold thee
in rest.

Where art thou? Where art thou? I long for
thy coming,

'Tis all desolation when thou art away!
Let me hear the dear footsteps that tell of thy
homing,
For only where thou art, is night turned to day.

What means this dread chillness that slowly
creeps o'er me?

Why gather the clouds in the darkening sky?

Why sinks my poor heart—and why hover before
me

Sad visions that warn me of misery nigh ?
Where art thou ? Where art thou ? Thou
hast not bereft me ? . . .

Too dearly we love, and too well, you and I ! . . .
But the sad stars above gently sigh “ He has left
thee,”

And the sorrowing night winds re-echo “ Good-
bye ! ”

FALLING LEAVES

THE summer of life is fading,
The autumn of life draws near,
And my sad heart strays to the old spring days
With a faltering yearning fear.
Is it over for ever and ever
The keen fresh morning of life—
Have I done with it all? . . . Shall I never
Join again in its glorious strife? . . .
“Past—past and gone—’tis for others—not for
thee,”
This is the mournful message the chill winds
bring to me.

The winter of life is closing,
The leaves of the years fall fast,
With a sorrowing cry and a darkening sky
They are whirled to the shadowy past;
But a soft, low whisper comes murmuring by
Bringing comfort—precious and blest,
“In the fields of a great Eternity
There is Spring-time, and Summer—and Rest.”

DOUBTING

DEAREST! can you really doubt me?
 (Others may perhaps forget)
But within my heart's recesses
 Thy sweet memory lingers yet . . .
Lingers when the silent midnight
 Calls to mind the hours of old—
Lingers, and in thickest darkness
 Brighter shines a hundred-fold!
Lingers when the sunlight gladdens,
 When the days are bright and fair,
Or in darkness or in radiance
 Thy dear face is ever there!
Be the hour to sadness given,
 Ardent hope, or vain regret,
Still, within my heart's recesses
 Thy sweet memory lingers yet,
 Lingers yet!

JUST FOR THE OLD DAYS' SAKE

WE parted in sorrow, my darling!
We parted in anger and pain,
But the chastening year, as its end draws near,
Has brought us together again. . . .
Then, for the old days' sake,
Ah! let your heart awake—
And let my hand clasp yours again
As in the olden time.
The clouds have left the sky
That shadowed our good-bye;
So let your heart awake—
Just for the old days' sake!

The days have been dreary, my darling!
I have waited and sorrowed alone,
But our meeting brings sunshine again to my
heart;
Oh! say that the darkness has gone!
Then, for the old days' sake,
Awake, dear love, awake!
And let my lips seek yours again
As in the olden time;
The clouds have left the sky,
No more we'll say good-bye,
If you'll let your heart awake—
Just for the old days' sake!

IT IS NOT EVENING YET

THOUGH in the shadowed twilight of the past
Between our lives the gloom of parting fell,
And though the years, with darkness overcast,
Have left upon our hearts their weary spell,
Though life has lost the brightness of the morn-
ing,
 It is not evening yet,
 It is not evening yet!

Old bonds are broken, but new hopes are lending
Their brightest visions to our future years,
And, in the dreaming of a love unending,
The anguished past of sorrow disappears,
Though life has lost the brightness of the morn-
ing,
 It is not evening yet,
 It is not evening yet!

Come then, dear love, whilst sunlight still is
 round us
Before the mists of eventide arise;
For all things now in heaven and earth surround
 us
With boundless love and sweetest ecstasies.
Though life has lost the brightness of the morn-
ing,
 It is not evening yet,
 It is not evening yet!

A DREAM SONG

DREAMS of our youth, when life is bright and
strong

With all the glories that before it lie,
When every pulse throbs one triumphal song
Of passionate ecstasy
Are only dreams . . . dreams . . . dreams !

Dreams of our man- or woman-hood that leave
Their roses or their thorns—whate'er they
bring ; —

Hopes, fears, and longings that exalt or grieve,
In wistful wondering
Are only dreams . . . dreams . . . dreams !

And dreams in age, when all is cold and chill,

When we can but remember and regret,
And bow our heads before an unknown Will,
But fondly cherish yet

Our earlier dreams . . . dreams . . . dreams !

WANING YEARS

THERE is a time that comes to all,
Amid the waning years,
When every thought is drear and sad
And darkened o'er with fears.

We mourn our youth, its vanish'd hours,
We mourn the glad, sweet past ;
And in our hearts, and in our souls
The shadows deepen fast,
The solemn shadows deepen fast.

Refrain

Gone are the dear old days of yore . . .
Bright, golden hours that come no more ;
For ever past—
Too bright to last.
They are no more, alas ! no more !

Yet still within us dwells a light
That time can never fade ;
It lives for ever while we live,
In sunshine and in shade.

Dear faces gleam throughout the gloom,
Soft voices fill the air . . .
And those we loved in olden hours
In sympathy are there—
In loving sympathy are there.

Refrain

Come then, dear memories of yore,
Sweet shadow memories of yore—
In spirit blend unto the end
For ever ever more. . . .

THE VETERAN

COMRADES, draw near! the days are dull and cold;
Our feeble limbs are chill with weary pain—
The glorious visions of the days of old

We only in our dreams may see again;
But whilst there's life, and whilst a trusty friend
Bides with us still to soothe our darkening age,
Those memories dear must linger to the end
And shine resplendent on th' embattled page.

Chorus

Hark! do you hear? the trumpet call awaits
us,

Mount, boys, and ride in answer to the
strain . . .

Comrades, fall in! the magic sound elates us,
To horse! the trumpet calls—to horse . . .
again.

Comrades, fall in! our ranks grow thin and
small . . .

To right and left of us old friends lie low;
Whence comes this stillness deepening over all?

What are those faces through the battle's glow?
What forms are these that o'er us seem to soar?

What do their spirit voices whispering say? . . .
Old friends, arise! 'tis time, the strife is o'er,

Cast down the sword and lance. Arise—
away. . .

Chorus Repeated

Hark! etc.

CREMATION HYMN

Written 1900. "Daily Mail," September 1913.

RECEIVE, O Lord, into Thine holy keeping
The soul of our dear brother passing on,
And let this mortal frame to air and sunlight
Return, its mission done.

As, by these flames, we purify the body,
So may Thy fire Divine remove all stain
From off this spirit, called to life immortal
And near Thee once again.

No slow corruption his—to us brief sorrow,
For, what in doubt and darkness men call Death
Is but—from earthly lips—a loving rendering,
O Lord! of thine own Breath.

WAR SONG

September 1914

EVERY man to the ships, every man to the ranks,
every man to his place of pride,
Till ye line as one, by the grim grey gun, on the
torn and trenched hill-side—
Wherever ye be, on land or sea, at this hour of
a world's alarms
There's only one clarion call for all, and that is
"Stand to your arms."
Aye, stand to your arms, with the shoulders
squared and the brave blood beating high,
For your Right is your Might in the tangled
fight, and your password "Do, or Die."

O ye of old, whose life-blood flowed in the wars
of the long ago,
Fill high the hearts of our lads to-day with the
same immortal glow
Till the strife is done and the battle is won and
Victory waves her palms
And Freedom clasps her sons to her breast, her
sons who stood to their arms.
Aye, stand to your arms, with the shoulders
squared and the brave blood beating high,
For your Right is your Might in the tangled
fight, and your password is "Do, or Die."

SONGS OF THE SERVICE



1857

AN ODE

Written for the occasion of the *Daily Telegraph's* Festival Dinner to the survivors of the Indian Mutiny in that year.

We who were there . . . we who to-day remain
Out of the thousands who have long passed on,
Look back to those dark days of our campaign
As to th' events of yesterday : upon
The tablets of our memory—dimmed and blurred
To things more recent—those tremendous days
Fraught with old England's anguish, all un-
slurred
By age or feebleness, are graven—always !——

So, at this moment, we are young once more,
Young in our thoughts, tho' wan and worn
our frames ;
Again we hear the assailing guns' dull roar,
The shriek of shell, the fury and the flames. . . .
For some upheld the Ridge of Delhi's heights,
Some of us manned the batteries in Lucknow,
And most of us were in a score of fights,
Scarce reckoned then, but all remembered now :

And some were—where our murdered women lay
In dread Cawnpore—with Wyndham's scanty
host,
All annals these, till Fame shall pass away,
To stir her blood when Britain needs it most.

Great names surge up on recollection's tide,
Nicholson, Havelock, Outram, Neil, Hugh Ross,
Sir John and Henry Laurence, Hodson, Clyde ;
Heroes indeed to stem a country's foes !
These from our " Roll of Honour " ; in this hall
Others of lustrous fame are with us still,
Ready—at need—to meet their nation's call
With unslacked powers of energy and will ;—
But not for all ; old age's leaden hand
Lies heavily on most, and nevermore
Can we aspire to obey the glad command,
" *Stand to your arms !* " . . . the Veteran's task
is o'er.

And so, to-day's great gathering holds its place
To voice an Empire's homage ; one deep knell
For those who save her, and here—face to face—
" *We who were there* " now bid our last Farewell.

CAWNPORE
PAST AND PRESENT

Written in 1872

“ I sat down under the shadow of Marochetti’s Memorial,
and thought of the last time I had been on the spot—just after
the Massacre.”

OVER the well where the murdered are sleeping,
Deep rests the shade of the Angel of Peace,
Ever above them its gentle watch keeping
Till the Last Trumpet rings forth a release.

All round, the bright flowers are laughing in glad-
ness,
Mocking the cypress’s pitying sigh ;
Green is the turf, and no echo of sadness
Comes on the soft zephyrs murmuring by.

Yet whence these flowers—but from blood of the
dying ?
Whence this soft turf—but from bones of dead
men ?
Blooming and springing, whilst Vengeance is
lying
Crouched, till the cannon shall rouse her again.

For, where the rose-leaves more thickly lie
scattered,
Once in its horrors the grim hovel stood,

Ceiling and flooring and lintel bespattered
Deep "with the stain" of our murdered ones'
blood. . . .

And, "O my God!" and "O Christ, spare my
children!"

On blurred walls, writ in infinite pain,
By trembling hands in their anguish bewild'ring
That—having written—ne'er wrote words
again.

Now—on the stone "*Out of great Tribulation
These are they that have come,*" is inscribed
overhead;

Calm and eternal the great Revelation
Tells to the world the repose of her dead.

Yet wake, O England! neglect not thy warning,
Thy Viceroy lies smitten, thy Councillors slain,
Wake! lest again be the days of thy mourning,
And all these thy martyrs be martyred in vain.

EVENING IN CASHMERE

A FRAGMENT

Written in 1867

ALONE amid the mountains. . . . Far away
Rise the bright masses of the eternal snows
Bathed in the crimson sunset, whilst beneath
The sombre fir-trees crown the distant hills,
Casting long shadows in the lake below. . . .
Most still and tranquil is the vast expanse
Of hill and wave, when day's declining orb
Sheds floods of softened gold on all the scene.

Still, and more still, the evening hour glides by,
Deep, and more deep, the evening shadows fall;
No sign of life nor man disturbs the calm
Save in the purpling distance, where a sail
Spreads o'er the darkening waters. . . . Even
now
The song of birds is hushing, and the air
Seems full of eloquence—for very stillness.

And so again 'tis night. . . . Hushed falls her
veil,
Blending the dreamy, silent vales afar,
The last warm gleam of light has left the sky,
And solemn darkness deepens over all. . . .

THE SENTRY

AFGHANISTAN

SLOWLY and dull the grey dawn breaks—
The camp fires smoulder low—
Bob Burton paces up and down,
He is on "sentry go."
The barren eastern hills lie dark,
But, to his ear and brain
There comes a muffled sound he knows—
He hears it once again.
For it's Oh! the wily Afghan with his knife be-
tween his lips,
And it's Ah! the wily Afghan with his tulwar
round his hips,
But it's Oh! Bobby Burton! if you do not have a
care,
The wily lithy Afghan, he will stick you then and
there.

Through the chill air the call rings out—
The camp fires smoulder low—
"Who's there?" It is Bob Burton's voice;
He is on "sentry go."
Against the shadowy morning light
There looms a figure grey,
A rifle shot, a stab, a cry!
Poor Bobby's passed away! . . .

For it's Oh! the wily Afghan with his knife
 between his lips,
And it's Ah! the wily Afghan with his tulwar
 round his hips,
And it's Oh! Bobby Burton! as you have not had
 a care,
The wily lithy Afghan, *he has stuck you then and
 there.*

THE BALLAD OF BROWN OF THE HUSSARS

YES! I'm "Brown" of the Hussars,
And at least I thank my stars
That I 'listed in the smartest of the forces,
For on service or parade
You'll not find them—they're not made!—
Who can beat our gay Hussar boys and their
horses—
And their horses.

Now, we're lately from the wars
(In a very righteous cause,
For the "Orders of the Day" are *always* right
ones),
But the evils and the ills
That obtain in frontier hills
Are occasionally tight ones—
Very tight ones.

Well! my name, though *now* 'tis "Brown"
Was once not unknown "in town,"
But I had to take the shilling, the Queen's
shilling,
For I'd run through all the "stuff,"
Which will happen, soon enough,
If you go the pace that's usually called killing—
Very killing.

So it came upon a day,
That I had to come away
From every one I cared for or I cherished.
And though now I laugh and smile
I much fear me all the while
The heart in me is veritably perished—
Really perished!

For there's one beyond the seas,
And I bless her on my knees,
Whose miniature I kept in my breast pocket,
And I'll tell you if you care,
And a little time to spare,
How my life was saved by wearing that dear
locket—
Her dear locket.

We were formed in "rank entire,"
And were going under fire
With the ordinary clatter and the rattle.
And their guns were booming out,
As we charged them with a shout
In all the gory glory of a battle,
Of a battle.

Then I felt a sudden sting,
And I heard a something ring
As I swayed a little on and off the saddle.
And I knew of nothing more
Till all the fight was o'er,
For on such occasions brains are apt to addle,
Just to addle!

But, as on the ground I lay,
 I remembered darling May
 And her locket ; from my breast I tried to pull
 it,
 But 'twas smashed beyond repair
 Though I found, embedded there,
 What I'll treasure to my death, this blessed
 bullet—

 . . . Blessed bullet !

And, it may be, by and by,
 That a cast of fortune's die
 May, some fine morning, give me my commission.
 And, my darling, if 'twere so,
 Do you think you could bestow
 Your forgiveness on my errors of omission
 And Commission ?

'OMEWARDS

'OMEWARD, 'Omeward, 'Omeward from the war
With the snows behind yer and the morning sun
before

Come "Jeldi" with the tattoo there, and
"Jeldi" with the "oont."

Ain't yer jolly glad, boys, that yer marching from
the front ?

Step out, my lads, step out, my lads ;
You've done your duty fair,
But you're apt to tire of 'Freddie's fire
When he snipes you from his lair.

Oh, he snipes you all the night
And he carves you all the day,
And all yer loot yer can put in yer boot
And—yer did not come to stay !

Yer've toiled along the nullahs and yer've moiled
among the stones,

And many a blooming Tommy's gone and left
behind his bones ;

Yer've shivered all the night and yer've starved
throughout the day.

Oh, ain't yer jolly glad, boys, that it's March,
March away !

The General's in his office-tent apraising up his
staff,

But some of yer could talk a bit, yer know too
much be 'alf,

And the blooming British Publick they are spoiling for to hear

How they come to lose them officers, aguarding of the rear.

'Omewards, 'Omewards, 'Omewards from the war,
But yer'd right-about, with a British shout, for
one rough-and-tumble more:

Just one rough-and-tumble *more*, boys, out here
upon the plain;

Oh, wouldn't they cry "Dawai! Dawai!" if yer
got at 'em once again!

ON BOARD THE *ADEN*

JUNE 22, 1897

RAGING wind and pitiless wave,
 (God, have mercy and send relief!)
Never a sail in sight to save,
 And the *Aden* fast on the deadly reef!

Thirteen days of terror and dread,
 Helpless, hopeless, lost aground,
Some of us maimed, and some of us dead,
 Fathers and mothers and children drowned.

Breakers sweeping the tangled deck,
 Breakers bursting in tons below,
We are crouching for shelter about the wreck
 As the terrible twilights come and go.

Huddled together with Death in the air,
 Death in the sea and a plank between . . .
What are they calling out there?
 "Lads! All together! 'God save the Queen.'

'God save the Queen!' tho' the end be near
 Sing the old Anthem before we die,
And greet the Jubilee Day with a cheer
 That shall echo us into Eternity."

THE SONG OF THE WORKHOUSE HERO

I'm a veteran of the Mutiny,
A 'ero of the past,
And me character bears scrutiny
From 'listing to the last.
But it strikes me bloomin' funny
That, at eighty, I should be
Without a home or money
In the "House" infirmary.
Then it's Oh! for the workhouse,
The stolid, squalid workhouse,
Where I finds myself with other pals to-day.
And it's Ah! for our great nation
For whose safety and salvation
We fought and bled five thousand miles away.

We saved her from disaster
In the days of long ago,
And we owned no man our master
When we grappled with the foe,
But we think as how she shuns us
Now we're wan and worn and old,
For on the rates she runs us
With a shoulder more than cold.
Then it's Oh! for the workhouse,
The stolid, squalid workhouse,
Where I finds myself with other pals to-day.
And it's Ah! for our great nation
For whose safety and salvation
We fought and bled five thousand miles away.

But I s'pose we must be grateful
For whatever we may get,
And a pauper's scanty plateful
Should be welcome to us, . . . yet
Once we thought old England's honour
Would have 'ardly liked to see
This 'ere sorry shame upon her
In our year of Jubilee.
Then it's Oh! for the workhouse,
The stolid, squalid workhouse,
Where I finds myself with other pals to-day.
And it's Ah! for our great nation
For whose safety and salvation
We did our best on many a bloody day.

THE OLD SPORTSMAN'S LAMENT

OH! we've ridden with the best,
Though they're most of them at rest,
And we've galloped after fox and stag and boar,
But the summer of our day
Has for ever passed away,
And we never shall be "with them" any more.
Then it's Oh! for youth, and it's Ah! for youth
In the hard-riding glory of its day,
But despite our best endeavour
It can never last for ever,
And it's all "Gone away! Gone away!" . . .

There were days when in the East
On some hard-mouthed, pulling beast
We were happy as the bird upon the wing,
But we wouldn't ride him now
At a trot down Rotten Row,
For it strikes us as a very different thing.
Then it's, etc.

There were times too in the "Shires"
When we ranked among the flyers
As they hustled and they bustled to the front,
And on crock or thoroughbred
Were not anxious to be "led"
When we wanted to be "forrard" in the hunt.
Then it's, etc.

And sometimes "between the flags"
On the riskiest of nags
We have donned the "amber jacket" of our
pride,
But a quiet ambling hack
Now best suits our aching back,
And we've lost the golden knack of how to ride.
Then it's, etc.

But we've memories galore
Of the fox and course and boar,
And we wouldn't give them up for all the world;
But there's no room at the fences
For the man of the past tenses,
So our colours now are furled—for ever furled.
Then it's, etc.

SONGS OF OUR DEAD

OUR DEAD

IN MEMORIAM : SOUTH AFRICA

THERE is a solemn sadness in the air,
A nation's sorrow fills a darkened sky,
Our island homes lie stricken, and Despair
Wails through the land one miserable cry,
Our Dead! . . . Our Dead! . . .

Our best beloved! . . . We call into the night
For those dear voices from the distant shore,
For vanished forms, our pride and our delight,
Longed for, but lost to us for evermore,
Our Dead! . . . Our Dead! . . .

O grief—of widow, orphan, parent, friend—
Thou art too terrible for solace yet!
The quivering pain must clutch the heart, and
rend
The soul that mourns and never can forget
Our Dead . . . Our Dead! . . .

Yet tarry not, Spirit of Peace, but bring
In thy good time sweet Resignation's balm;
Of thy great mercy whisper, pitying,
“Lo! these thy fallen feel no further harm,”
Our Dead! . . . Our Dead! . . .

And, through all anguish, there shall linger still
One noblest comfort, that our loved ones gave
Their lives for England, and—at England's will—
Died for her sake, as ever die her brave,
Our Dead! . . . Our Dead! . . .

THE MANDATE

I CALLED to the Spirit of Earth . . . and I said
“ What of the living—and what of the dead ?
What of the horrors that gather around us ?
What of the infinite griefs that surround us ?
Where is the pity and where is the love
If these things be—from a Mandate above ? ”

I called to the Spirit of Truth . . . and I said
“ What of the living—and what of the dead ?
Are they but phantoms that vanish before us ?
Are they but shadows all hovering o’er us ?
Where is the pity and where is the love
If these things be—from a Mandate above ? ”

There came the Spirit of Earth, and it said
“ Asketh thou, man,—of the living or dead ?
I am as thou art, I know not, I care not,
I seek not the reason, I crave not, I dare not . . .
And as to the pity and as to the love,
I only know *Law*—from a Mandate above.”

Visioned the Spirit of Truth, and it said
“ Ask me no more of the living or dead ;
Time in its æons may sometime unfold it,
But blindness, and dogmas, and creeds still withhold it ;
Wait for the Daylight—perchance it will prove
If there be pity and if there be love ! ”

YES OR NO ?

Written in 1886

WHAT does it mean—this transient fleeting vision ?

What is the sum of these, our earthly days ?
Is it an earnestness—or a derision—

That portions out our ever-changing ways ?
Does the sun glow on us in love or anger ?

In sighs or laughter, do the soft winds blow ?
Is living *life* . . . or, is it only languor,
An everything or nothing. . . . Yes or No ?

Spirit of Truth ! rest o'er me in this gloaming,
This light that is not light, this day *not* day.
Thy hand must lead me onward to the homing
Where doubts and dreamings shall have passed
away.

The air is full of longings and of voices
That whisper "Man shall also shortly know,"
And in this fervent hope my soul rejoices,
For Thou shalt answer the great "Yes or No ?"

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

WHAT do *ye* know that *we* know not too,
O Popes, and Prelates, and Priests ;
With your councils, your creeds, and your dogmas,
Your vigils, your fasts, and your feasts ?
Can you tell us the why and the wherefore,
Can you draw the dark curtain aside ?
Can you state the "because" and the "there-
fore"
And say what Eternities hide ?

We linger and listen for voices,
The prayer of our souls is for light !
But only a darkness surrounds us,
The darkness of infinite night.
Can you give us the reason of evil,
Excuse the vast charnel of earth ?
Say if power rests with God or the Devil,
And prove what your teachings are worth ?

We stretch forth our hands to the shadows
In our terrible trouble of pain,
But there never is any that answereth,
And we grope in the gloaming in vain ;
O faiths that turn dust with the ages,
O creeds that—reluctant—we leave,
Is there no God nor Prophet to save us
And to bid our souls "Hear and Believe ?"

It may be the dawning is breaking
As the century droops to its death,

It may be the new one shall lift us
On the blast of its ethical breath
Till the highest empyrean find us
Far above the dark clouds of the past,
With its dogmas and creeds left behind us,
In the light of the Heavens—at last!

THE OVER-SOUL

THOU shalt believe in a Triune God, say the
Ancient Creeds to men ;
Thou shalt believe in the One Great Mind, says
the soul's true denizen ;
For thou art part of the sphere's great heart, and
thou art one with the Whole,
And the essence of all immortal life exists in the
Over-Soul.

How shall we gauge it, how shall we wage it, this
battle of Ethical thought ?
Are we eternal or non-eternal—are we all things
or naught ?
Do we but droop in senile stoop back to Earth's
fecund womb ?
Or do we rise in immortal guise, beyond the
desolate tomb ?

Ye are but purblind leaders, who preach that
our utmost need
Can be met by a faith in a Semite book and the
Athanasian Creed !
Who damn with a text in this world and the next,
if we stray from the Church's path,
And believe that creeds shall be more than deeds
when God gathers His aftermath.

And ye are but poor philosophers, ye who do
say we must
Wane with the years in grief and tears and turn
again to the dust ;

Our Souls are ourselves—(though our dust be
dust, and our body sinks to the sod)
Coeval with all Eternity—and part of the Very
God.

June 1899.

TO OUR LOST DARLING

THY pure bright spirit must be with the blest
 If blest there are ;
Wrenched from this nether world—this hell's
 unrest,
 And better far :
But we, who fain must wait with breaking hearts,
 Who cannot see
The awful purposes that Death imparts
 To our Eternity—
We can but linger on a little time,
 Still cherishing
One thought—to meet again in some vast sphere
 sublime,
 Unperishing.

TEARS

I CANNOT keep them back, these gushing tears,
They'll have their way, whether I will or no.
A word, a look, a thought of other years
Stirs the deep heart-springs and the waters
flow.

But not in murmuring—the Heart-searcher sees
They are the very tears I often shed
When in his childhood standing at my knees
I laid my hand upon my darling's head. . . .

Tears full of tenderness and trembling love,
Tears full of fears and hopes for what might be!
Tears that still flow, tho' he is safe above,
Above all tears, and fears, and hopes from me.

His gentle presence, with us all the while,
To thoughts and feelings lends its mellowing
aid:
To mirth emotion, and to tears a smile,
To clouds a rainbow, and to sunshine shade.

Alas! Alas! that I with one sick sigh
Back from his bliss my blessed one would bring!
Who cares for time who hath Eternity?
Who'd change a seraph's for an eagle's wing?

NOT HIS MEMORY

No more, as once when deem'd more truly ours
Is he from eye, or ear, or thought removed ;
As when in schoolboy days, or festal hours,
Forced to be absent from the home he loved.

Then he *was* absent—Memory even then
Sometimes forgot him, in her careless joy
Sure of the day when he would come again,
Train'd into trust for th' adventurous boy.

But now he's *ever* present. Eye and ear
And busy thought are never now alone ;
Who'er is distant, he is always near—
Never so ever near, as now he's gone.

HIS PRESENCE

IN the lone walk, by the bright hearth of home,
In the world's pathways, 'mid the hush of
prayer,
Where mine eyes wander, where my footsteps
roam,
He is beside me, with me, everywhere.

In the old haunts where we have often strayed
Down by the river, up the woodland lawn,
In the deep, tender gloom of evening's shade,
In the bright, bursting break of morning's
dawn. . . .

Wherever pleasant sight or gentle sound
Lightens the eye or lingers in the air,
I see his form, the music floats around
Of his sweet voice . . . I hear it everywhere.

HIS NAME

SHUN not his name ; may the day never dawn
When we shall dread to breathe it in his home ;
Tho' with drooped eye, hushed voice and sigh
half drawn
And its ten thousand memories it come.

So—tho' in deepest reverence be it said—
'Mid home's sweet sanctities his name is dear,
Hushing the brightest voice, the airiest tread,
Heard in the heart before it reach the ear.

THE GARDEN

BEAUTIFUL garden where he loved to stray!
Birds whose soft music all the air doth fill!
Where is your beauty—now he's far away?
Where is your music—now his voice is still?

Bowers where we sat and talked till set of sun!
Flowers which he twined to wreath a brother's
head!
Wherefore your shadow—now his day is done?
Wherefore your fragrance—now that he is
dead?

Ah! beauty deeper than the eye can see,
And fragrance finer than can fill the air,
And songs more sweet than sylvan melody,
Wherever he has been, are with me there.

A SONG OF SORROW

WHERE is the "healing of thy wings," O Time?
Why tarriest thou to soothe our aching sorrow?
The weary months go on in fall or prime,
But—in our grief—one day is like its morrow.
Why tarriest thou, O Time?

All sunlight faded from our deadened lives
When our lost first-born left us to our anguish,
No solace is there that this lingering gives,
We only wait, and mourn, and droop, and
languish,
Why tarriest thou, O Time?

What wondrous gladness filled our hearts—*before!*
What horror *now* fills up our hearts despondent
Now that the glory of our lives is o'er,
Now that all faith has ceased to be respondent,
Why tarriest thou, O Time?

Come then and heal us! Soothe this mastering
woe
With death's swift stroke—or senile decadence!
Give us forgetfulness, or let us go. . . .
He cannot come to us, and we would fain go
hence.
Why tarriest thou, O Time?

And yet . . . and yet . . . delay a little while,
There still is one who claims our heart's affection,

Our second-born—perchance he may beguile,
Some day, our souls into a resurrection.

Tarry thou yet, O Time!

March 1901.

MY ELDEST SON

THEY little know love's immortality
Who speak of death as if it could destroy :
Of the departed, as if passed away—
Of the survivor, as my eldest boy.

He may and will (God bless him) rightly claim
His brother's lot on earth—but in our love
There is no vacancy, no forfeit name ;
No right is lost for him who lives above.

His day and duty upon earth are done ;
To him an earlier rest from toil was given.
Lost ? God forbid ! I have not lost my son,
He is at Home and safe—he is in Heaven.

THE TWO SHIPS

I SENT forth a ship on the ocean of life,
It was launched with an infinite care,
And I vainly thought that the stress and strife
Were no more than that ship could bear.
For the timbers were sound and the craft well
found
And the compass I reckoned upon,
But Death hovered round and she took the ground
And, that ship bore—my eldest son!

I am sending another ship out to-day,
She is dipping her bows to the gale,
Over-daring, perhaps, but all grave mishaps
May be weathered by furling a sail.
With an anxious heart I see her depart
To battle life's storms anon. . . .
God grant her a safe and a trusty chart
For, she carries—my only son!

THE SUMMIT

1904

I HAVE but little further to ascend. . . .
And—of that little—most is wrapped in cloud
Impenetrable, but this know I well,
That — entering there — the frozen hand of
Death

Shall grasp my own in a grim welcoming. . . .
So—ere I leave the sunlight of the earth
One backward glance I turn, and—turning—see
Things clearer than I erst beheld till now ;
For, from this calmer altitude, my soul,
Before it leaves the body, lucidates
The littleness of every earthly thing,
Passion and prejudice, envy, hate and ill,
Once looming large, but now of small account :
The littleness of the Churches with their creeds
Founded on error, fraud, and ignorance ;
The littleness of the nations prone to war
Because a rivulet divides their realms,
And Patriots' war against Humanity ;
The littleness of the Classes where—within
A cannon's range—starvation glowers on wealth,
And wealth ignores the danger from the starved ;
The littleness of the gods who rise and fall
Each in their narrow orbit, El and Bel,
Jahveh and Pthah, and they of high Olympus ;
The littleness of the sages of the world
From immemorial time, who grope and gaze
Purblind—in search of a more perfect way

Towards the great Mystery of mysteries. . . .
But I — who now stand near the summit's
top—
Have but to wend my way towards the cloud,
And meet therein *some* knowledge of the All.

L'ENVOI

DAWN

1905

SECRET of all things ! Ah, unfold thy telling. . . .
Lift the dread veil, and let us see aright.
Sweep back the mystery of our dark in-dwelling
And give us light—more light !

Age upon age rolls on—and yet the gloaming
Rests on our souls ; the dawn is dim and slow.
Reveal ! Reveal ! . . . to us so near our homing
Before we go . . . before we go. . . .

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